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TAGS: [PREL](#) [AMGT](#) [SZ](#) [CU](#)
SUBJECT: SWISS ASSISTANCE WITH USINT OPERATING DIFFICULTIES

REF: SECSTATE 177394

Classified By: Poloff Eric K. Lundberg, Reasons 1.4 b/d

1.(C) Embassy Bern conveyed reftel message to the Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and met personally with DFA Deputy Americas chief Urs Hammer and North America desk officer Werner Thut to review the points prior to the October 24 meeting between DFA Americas Director Yvonne Baumann and resident Cuban Ambassador Ana Maria Rovira Ingidua. Our Swiss counterparts affirmed their interest in helping USINT resolve its issues with the GOC. Ambassador Coneway also plans to convey the message with visiting Swiss Ambassador Ziswiler on October 25.

"Not sure they know what they are doing"

2.(C) Following the Baumann-Rovira meeting, DFA Caribbean desk officer Stefano Vescovi told Poloff that Cuban officials appeared to be acting more peculiarly than he had seen them behave during his previous four years handling USINT issues. Ambassador Rovira Ingidua appeared uncomfortable and out of touch with the situation in Havana. Clearly under instructions, Rovira Ingidua questioned whether Switzerland's status as protecting power even gave it a mandate to convey the USG message to the Government of Cuba. Swiss officials, for their part, pointed out several inconsistencies in the Cuban message.

3.(C) Vescovi professed surprise at this turn in Cuban behavior. Until now, he observed, he had always felt able to exchange views in a frank manner, including with Ambassador Rovira Ingidua. Vescovi wondered whether recent personnel changes in the Cuban Foreign Ministry (the replacement of a vice minister) might be a reason for the change. His overall impression: "I'm not sure they know what they are doing."

4.(C) Following discussions within the DFA and with Swiss Ambassador Bertrand Louis in Havana, Vescovi hoped the Swiss would have a clearer idea how to assist USINT with its difficulties.
CONEWAY